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H – 949

International Court of Justice

Com. B.
Take 1 - 1
Winkler
17 June 1946
1000 to 1130 hours
Time - 1

H0949 - 0002

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY FOR THE DEFENSE OF ORGANIZATIONS, TAKEN BEFORE A COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL DATED 13 MARCH 1946.

17 June 1946

COMMISSIONER:

Mr. George R. Taylor

CORPS OF POLITICAL LEADERS

(The Commission convened at 1128 hours)

PAUL KOPPE, a witness, took the stand and testified as follows:

BY THE COMMISSIONER:

Will the witness raise his right hand and state his name and repeat after me?

THE WITNESS: Paul Koppe

MR. TAYLOR: I swear by God, the Almighty and Omniscient, that I will speak the pure truth and will withhold and add nothing.

(The witness repeated)

MR. TAYLOR: Witness will please sit down.

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY DR. NATH(Defense Counsel)

Q. Witness, you are by profession a municipal civil servant and have practiced as such for the last thirty-two years?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it correct that you are 49 today?

A. Yes.

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Q Q. What were your motives for entering the party and when did you join the party?

A. I joined the party on the first of May 1933. I hoped that the party would lead Germany out of the economic misery.

Q. Were you a member of any democratic political party before 1933, or were you organized politically at all?

A. I was not a member of any political party previous to 1933. I was a member of the Federation of Municipal civil servants and employees.

Q. You were a Hauptamtsleiter official of the Gaulamtsleiter party for the communial policy, and attached to the staff of Gauleiters. From when until when did you hold this office and where did you hold this office and is that place your home town?

A. I held this office from January 1, 1944, until the end of the War at Bochum and later at Herne. Neither of them was my hometown, but I had lived in Herne since 1922.

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Q. How did it happen that you were to hold the office of a Hauptstellenleiter?

A. My chief, the Lord Mayor of Herne, was at the same time Gauamtsleiter for Community Policy. Due to the fact that I had a broad training and experience in matters of community administration, he selected me as a co-worker in his Party office.

Q. Did you get any identifying papers or uniforms in your position as a party official?

A. I did not get any papers, but I did get a uniform.

Q. Wasn't there in existence a regulation that only that one could wear the uniform of a Political Leiter who also was in possession of a Political Leiter's identifying papers?

A. Yes, such a regulation was in existence, but an exception was made in my case because I was supposed to participate in meetings.

Q. Were there in existence regulations compelling Party members to accept Party office or to join organizations of the party?

A. Without a very good reason, as for illness or being overburdened by work, nobody could refuse an office. Generally it was expected that you would join your professional organization, as for instance the German Labor Front or the German Association of Civil Servants. However, to join the SA, SS, or Hitler Youth was voluntary.

Q. Was it possible to give up a political office for political reasons, that is, not sharing the views of the Nazi Party? If so, did that have political consequences for the person concerned?

A. Practically, no. But it had political consequences. Under certain circumstances you could be withdrawn from the Nazi Party.

Q. For 32 years you were a civil servant in community service. If a

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civil servant was expelled from the Nazi Party because he refused to accept a political office or because he did not want to continue to serve in that office, would that result in consequences as far as the position of the civil servant was concerned?

A. He lost his position, his salary, his pension claims; and his family got into serious distress.

Q. Please describe to the Commission the structure of the Office for Community Policy of the Nazi Party.

A. With the Reichsleiter, the supreme officer of the Party, there was a Hauptamt, a main office for Community Policy with the Reichsleiter as its head. On the level of the Gau, there was an Amt for Community Policy with a Gauamtsleiter and his five assistants. The functions of those five assistants were: one was the director of the office; the second was concerned with structures and settlements and colonization; the third was concerned with legal matters, culture, and training; the fourth was concerned with questions of relief, workers, and civil servants; and the last was in charge of community plants. In disciplinary matters the Gauamtsleiter and his five assistants were subordinate to the Gauleiter. But as far as the professional instructions were concerned, they were received direct from the Hauptamt for Community Policy with the Reichsleiter. The Hauptstellenleiter did not have any staff of assistants. It was contemplated that they should have assistants, but that plan was never carried out. On the level of the Kreis, there was a Kreisamtsleiter for Community Policy who, in disciplinary matters again, was subordinate to the Kreisleiter. But his professional directives were received from the Gauamtsleiter for Community Policy. Those Kreisamtsleiters for Community Policy, again, were only one main office. There was no office for Community Policy on the level of

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the Ortsgruppe.

Q. Please describe the activity of the Gauamtsleiter for Community Policy.

A./ He was concerned with the self-governing tasks of his community, as, for instance, buildings and settlements, community legal matters, culture, theater, music, professional training, relief, workers, civil servants, employees, and economic questions. He was with the Hauptstelle for employees, civil servants, and workers. Practically, he was mainly concerned with the questions of salary, training, instructions, and administrative procedure. We were exclusively professional ~~xxxx~~ advisors of the Gauamtsleiter. Without having received a special order, we never communicated with any higher or lower Party officials.

Q. Did the leiter of the office for Community Policy participate in the staff meetings of the Gauleiter regularly, and how often did those meetings take place?

A. As far as I know, they participated in such conferences every month or every second month.

Q. Did they receive on the Gau level from the Gauleiter, and on the Kreis level from the Kreisleiter, any kind of orders; and, if so, what kind?

A. In accordance with a Gau law called Gau Community Regulation, the Gauleiter issued orders to the Gauamtsleiter in regard to the filling of high vacancies in the community organization.

Q. Please give details of what kind of orders he issued.

A. In accordance with the above-mentioned law, the Gau Community Regulation, the Gauamtsleiter had a special function. He had the privilege of taking action whenever a vacancy occurred to be filled. And then the State ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ authority, the Regierungspraesident, had to appoint to such offices.

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That was practically the manner of how the Gauleiter established the contact between Party and State.

Q. In what way did the Gauamtsleiter for Community Policy fill a function in the filling of such vacancies?

A. He saw to it that the person suggested to fill that vacancy should have the right qualifications and training.

Q. Do I understand you correctly, that you are referring to the professional civil servant's qualifications?

A. Essentially his professional qualifications as civil servant.

Q. What was the connection with the Office for Community Policy with other organizations--the SS, the German Labor Front, etc.

A. There was no connection whatsoever.

Q. Did you know the Organizations Book? Could you tell on the basis of your experience whether the contents of this book has been observed in the roster of regulations it followed?

A. No, I didn't know that Organizations Book; and if it should have been the definite yardstick for all Party practices, I believe the officials would have known it.

Q. The Amtsstellenleiter and the Hauptstellenleiter for Community Policy are considered political leiters. Did they have anything to do with politics in the narrow sense of the word?

A. No, they didn't.

Q. Do you, therefore, think that it was correct that those amtsstellenleiters and hauptstellenleiters for Community Policy were called political leiters?

A. No; it would have been much more appropriate if they had been called professional advisors; and I understand that that term had

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been used at an earlier date.

Q. Was it, therefore, correct to call that office, "Office for Community ~~Policy~~ Politics"?

A. No, it would have been better to call that office, "Office for Community Matters." As a matter of fact, that office didn't have any influence on the politics of the community.

Q. Would it be fair to call the "Office for Community Policy" a merely professional office?

A. Yes.

Q. Were there other offices of such merely professional nature? If so, which?

A. Similar offices of such a professional nature were the Office for Technique, the Office for Education, the Office for Audition and Revisions, the Office of Agriculture, the Office of University Teachers, and the Office of Civil Servants.

Q. Should one also add the Office for Veterans?

A. The Office for Trained Crafts and Industries, yes.

Q. Did you know whether the political leiters you knew belonged to the Christian Church?

A. A number of those I knew did belong to a Christian Church.

Q. Did the political leiters receive, either from the Gauleiter, from the Kreisleiter, or from the Ortsgruppenleiter, instructions to leave the Church?

A. No, they didn't receive such instructions.

Q. Now I am coming to the specific points of the indictment. The Ax. Prosecution has charged that the political leiters joined and shared

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in a common plan of conspiracy with the purpose of carrying out crimes against the people, the laws of warfare and humanity. The Prosecution considers the ~~party program~~ Party Program the main basis for those charges. I shall confront you with a few of those points of the Party Program, and would like to have your attitude from the standpoint of the political leiters. In regard to Point One, from which I quote: "We demand the union of all Germans, on the basis of self-governing rule, into a greater Germany." Express your opinion on that.

A. If I understand correctly, that point referred particularly to Germans living in border areas, as, for instance, Austria and the Sudeten District. If I remember correctly, both Austria and the Sudetenland had expressed their desire after the first World War to join Germany in one way or another.

Q. In regard to land and soil, Point Three of the Party Program--I quote: "We demand land and soil (colonies) to feed our people and to resettle our surplus population." Was this point interpreted in the Corps of Political Leiters, and particularly that faction which you had in your offices--was that to be interpreted as a plan for conquest of foreign territory?

A. No. Germany was not able to feed all of its population, and therefore it was claimed to get back part of the colonies by way of negotiations. The use of force in that field was entirely out of the question because Germany didn't have the navy to conduct warfare of that kind overseas.

Q. Did the leiters of the professional offices in the staff of the Gauleiter or Kreisleiter, particularly the Office for Community Policy, have any part as leaders, organizers, instigators or conspirators in carrying out

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of a common plan or conspiracy aimed at the committing of a crime against the people, and what did those professional leiters know of such a plan or such a conspiracy?

A. They didn't know of such a plan.

Q. Did the professional leiters learn within the framework of the Party anything of the plan of aggressive war against Poland?

A. No, they didn't learn anything.

Q. How did the leiters of the professional office react to the outbreak of war in September, ~~1939~~ 1939?

A. Not with enthusiasm or fanatical attitude, but with gravity.

Q. Were they surprised by the outbreak of the war?

A. Yes, they were surprised.

Q. In regard to the unequal evaluation of ~~xxx~~ races and to anti-Semitism, Point Four of the Party Program: "A citizen can be only one who is a member of the German People. A German can be only one who is of the German faith. Therefore, no ~~xx~~ Jew can be a German." This program resulted in a most horrible persecution of the Jews. How was this part of the Party Program interpreted by the political leiters whom you know--that means by the leiters of the professional offices?

A. This point was explained to us in the following manner: that the influence of the Jewish fellow citizens in the State and in the economy should be restricted in accordance with their numbers. This should be performed in a humane manner and only by legal means.

Q. This led subsequently to various forms of persecution of Jewish citizens, as, for instance, their wearing of the Jewish Star and getting different food rations, and being limited in living quarters, and, finally, their deportation to concentration camps. Did the political leiters of the

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Offices for Community Policy have anything to do whatsoever with any of those plans?

A. No, they had nothing to do with any of them.

Q. How did they learn of those anti-Jewish measures?

A. Not through the Party, but rather through the press and ~~kkaugh~~ through the actual happenings.

Q. In regard to rearmament, I quote from the Party Program: "We demand the getting rid of a mercenary troop and the formation of a people's army." Was this point of the Party Program to be interpreted as a demand for an aggressive war?

A. The transformation of a mercenary troop into a people's army could not be interpreted into a demand for aggressive warfare. For instance, Switzerland had a people's army and never conducted an aggressive war.

Q. May I ask you for a brief summary. Did the political leiters, particularly the leiters of professional offices, consider the quoted points of the Party Program as major points of a common plan of conspiracy to conquer their own people and ~~kkm~~ foreign people, for subsequent crimes against peace, the rules of war, and humanity?

A. No, that did not occur to us at all. We never believed in an aggressive war. We acted in good faith, and we were told that peace and the building of a social State would be accomplished.

Q. The Prosecution further claims that the Corps of Political Leiters, which would ~~xkxxkd~~/include the leiters for the Office of Community Policy, was responsible for all measures, including those of a legislative matter, which were taken ~~fx~~ by State and Government in Germany to engage in a conspiracy carried on by the conspirators considered criminal and the organization considered criminal. Did the Amtsleiters for Community Policy at the Gau or kreis level have any possibility to influence the legislation of the Third Reich,

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maybe only in the form of mere suggestions?

A. Only in matters of merely professional nature could the Amtsleiters make such suggestions--which then were forwarded through the Party officials to the Ministry of State/which was concerned with those matters/. This occurred in regard to the legal form of community plans, in regard to the salary of candidates for a military career, and the training regulations for candidates for the community civil service.

Q. Significant examples of the participation of the Corps of Political Leiters, the indictment charges, were given by the participation of the Political Leiters in the persecution of the Christian Church. Were the leiters of professional offices, for instance the Hauptstellenleiters for Community Policy--were they informed on the opinions of the supreme Party leadership in regard to Christianity and in regard to the Christian churches? I am submitting to you a letter from the Chief of the Chancellory, Reichsleiter Bormann, which he directed to all gauleiters in 1941. It is the Prosecutions document No. D 75. It is entitled, "Relationship between National Socialism and Christianity", and I quote: (I have to quote the most essential sentences of that document in order to ask the witness questions on it, and I ask the witness because he was attached to the staff of the gauleiter.) "National Socialism and Christianity are incompatible. Our National Socialistic philosophy is far superior to the philosophy of Christianity which, in its essential parts, is derived from Judaism. When, therefore, our youth at a future date will not hear anything anymore of the teaching of the definitely inferior Christianity, then Christianity will disappear automatically. From the incompatibility of National Socialistic and Christian opinions, it is concluded that we have to refuse all strengthening of existing or the support of developing Christian churches."

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..."More and more progressively we have to ~~x~~ see to it that the people will take the influence out of the hands of the churches and their organs, the ministers. Just as the harmful influence of the astrologists and prophets and other swindlers have been eliminated and superseded by the State, the influence of the Church must be eliminated without any remainder." This was the opinion of Reichsleiter and Chief of the Party Chancellory Bormann at the end of 1941. Did the ~~leiters~~ leiters of the professional offices in your district ~~x~~ know of those expressions and ideas?

A. I was not informed of their opinions. I don't think that any of my colleagues knew about it, or they would have told me about it.

Q. This letter by Bormann went to all ~~gauleiters~~ gauleiters, and there exists the possibility that the opinions of the ~~Chief~~ Chief of the Party Chancellory, in ~~regard~~ regard to his attitude against churches, at least in its main contents, has been given to the staffs of the gauleiters and the kreisleiters.

A. Even in its main contents, that instruction has not been handed down to us. In that matter we always expected instruction or regulation, but it never came.

Q. A large number of ministers, both Protestant and Catholic, and members of orders were arrested and ordered to concentration camps; and the property of the Church was confiscated. Did the Party leadership give any reasons for those measures of arresting ministers and confiscating Church properties?

A. No, nothing was told to us about them. If we learned about them at all, it was only through the press.

Q. Would you be in a position to ~~say~~ say that the amtsleiters for community questions did not have any part in the carrying out of those measures and had no influence on them?

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A. No, they had no part in it and no influence on it.

Q. Another example of the participation of the political leiters in the conspiracy, given by the Prosecution, is its supposed share in the destruction of the trade unions. The Prosecution states that, "Soon after the seizure of power, on May 2, 1933, ~~xxxxxx~~ prominent members of the Corps of Political Leiters of the Party participated in the destruction of the free trade unions." Proceedings, German text, Page 1449, December 18th. Do you know, Witness, who caused the destruction of the trade unions and who carried it out?

A. As far as I know, it was performed by Leyh, who decided to create one labor union for all.

Q. Do you know whether the Office for Community Policy had a share in that action at all?

A. I don't think so.

Q. The Prosecution charges that there is a responsibility of the Corps of Political Leiters in connection with the ~~Einsatzstab~~ Einsatzstab Rosenberg in the occupied territories and the taking away of art treasures from there. Did the hauptstellenleiters and the gauamtsleiters for community questions know of the functions and nature of the Einsatzstab Rosenberg?

A. No, nothing was known about that.

Q. May I conclude from that that the Office for Community Policy had nothing to do with the purposes and functions of the Einsatzstab Rosenberg?

A. Yes; the Office ~~xfxx~~ for Community Policy had nothing to do with that at all.

Q. Now, again to those points of the indictment concerned with crimes against the rules of international warfare. The Corps of Political Leiters is charged with participating in the murder and wounding and mistreatment of Allied fliers who bailed out over Germany or over German-held ~~xxxxxxxx~~

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areas. It is claimed that many pilots were not treated as prisoners of war, but were mistreated or murdered by German civilians--with the approval, yes, under the direction, of certain members of the Corps of Political Leiters. In this regard the Prosecution has submitted the following document, which I would like to show you. It is the Prosecution's Document PS 057, excerpt from a letter of Reichsleiter Bormann of May 30, 1944. May I ask you to read this very brief document. That letter contains the statement that, in various cases, pilots who bailed out or who had to make emergency landings were lynched by the outraged population immediately after their landing. And then the letter goes on: "It was refrained from taking police or criminal legal action against those members of the people who participated in those actions." The Prosecution stresses that this Bormann letter has been distributed through the order of the command of the Corps of Political Leiters and that they were listed on that distribution--kreisleiters, gauleiters, and the leaders of various organizations. Please pay attention to the distribution key at the end of the document where some man by the name of Friedrich asks that the ortsgruppenleiters are to be informed of the letter only orally. At that time, May 1944, you were a/hauptstellenleiter for community policy. Therefore, as a leiter of the professional office, you belonged to the enlarged staff of the gauleiter. Have the leiters of the professional offices received knowledge of this Bormann letter in any way, or have they learned of its contents by any other means?

A. I did learn of the contents of the Bormann letter, not in my capacity as a hauptstellenleiter, but through other channels. I don't recall from whom, and from the key of distribution it can be learned that the gauamtsleiters were not supposed to get knowledge of that letter.

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Q. Did you, as a hauptstellenleiter for Community Policy, receive any instructions for how enemy afiators should be treated in case of emergency landings?

A. No, the leiters of professional offices had nothing to do with that.

Q. Were there any emergency landings of Allied fliers in or near your district? How were they treated?

A. Later I learned that one American flier landed near Herne and was kept in the Catholic hospital at Herne until the Americans arrived.

Q. I would like to ask you one more question in regard to instructions given by Hitler to Reichsleiter Bouhler and Dr. Brandt in regard to mercy killings. That point, too, has been used in a charge against the Corps of Political Leiters. This order refers to the granting of the privilege to a number of physicians to be named, who should get the right to administer those mercy killings in those cases where, in accordance with human knowledge, the ill people could not be cured again. (German text 1423, Proceedings December 17th.) That is a point of the oral trial brief, no document--part of the oral brief given at the session of December twelfth.) Did the leiters of the Office for Community Policy know anything of the order by Hitler,and did they have anything to do with its carrying out?

A. I do not know of that order. From the beginning of the war until 1942 I was a soldier, and after my return I never conversed on that matter.

Q. Finally, I would like to ask you a few questions in regard to block and zellen leiters.

A. I do not wish to make any statements about that subject. I can speak of the blockleiter of my own district and how I know him.

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Q. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Were you a blockleiter?

A. No.

Q. Were you a zellenleiter?

A. No.

Q. In your opinion, what were the tasks and functions of the block and zellen leiters?

A. The block and zellen leiter~~s~~ collected the party membership fees. He ~~They~~ called meetings of the Party, and at times he ~~they~~ conducted collections for the Party. Only after the number of air raids increased did the block and zellen leiter~~s~~ get more important tasks. ~~They became~~ He became a sort of emergency aid, and in that function had to help the wounded and provide shelter for those whose homes were destroyed.

Q. Could you tell the Commission how the people characterized the work of the blockleiters?

A. They were called a higher category of bank messenger.

Q. Making reference to the ~~xxxx~~ Organization Book of the Party, the Prosecution has charged that the blockleiters had the best contact with the population and therefore were suitable for the political influencing and the political supervision and surveillance of the people; and Justice Jackson has called the blockleiters the "little ~~Xxx~~ Caesars who terrorized the people." Is that correct?

A. No. That is not correct. Blockleiters as a whole were younger members of the Party who were not fanatics.

Q. The Prosecution, through Colonel Storey (Proceedings, German text 1380, December 17th), states that the police ~~policy~~ in Germany was represented by the blockleiters. Actually the blockleiters were the little leaders with real and actual power of the citizens in their district. Is that correct?

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A. No, that is not correct. The police, alone, carried out the ~~six~~ rights and privileges of the police, and the blockleiters had nothing to do with that.

Q. The Prosecution ~~found~~ further charges "without responsibility before the law, and without being authorized to do so by any court, the Nazis were in position to confiscate property, to deprive people of their liberty--even of their lives." Were the blockleiters or zellenleiters ever given any of those privileges?

A. No, that is entirely out of the question, and I didn't know of one instance of that kind.

Q. Leyh, in his Organizations Book, calls the blockleiter and zellenleiters "Hoheitstraegers." Who, in practice, was a hoheitstraeger, and were the block and zellen leiters practically given hoheitstraegers' rights?

A. ~~Nox~~ Neither the block or zellen leiters had any hoheitstraggers' ~~Qx~~ rights.

Q. It is, therefore, correct that the Organizations Book calls the block and zellen leiters hoheitstraegers?

A. No.

Q. The Prosecution has excepted the members of the staff of the ortsgruppenleiter. ~~Xxxxx~~ Were the block and zellen leiters superiors of the political leiters staff in the office of the ortsgruppenleiter?

A. No, block and zellen leiters were not the superiors of the political leiters in the office of the ortsgruppenleiter.

Q. Who had higher privileges--the political ~~xxxxxx~~ leiters in the staff of the ortsgruppenleiter, or the block and zellen leiters?

A. In my opinion, the members of the staff of the ortsgruppenleiter had greater privileges and rights, because they were authorized to give

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orders ~~xx~~ of the whole territory, while the block and zellen leiters could give orders only to the very small territory of the block or zellen.

Q. I am quoting from the Organizations Book, PS 1893, Page 101: "The block ~~xxx~~ leiter has to find those who spread damaging rumors, and he ~~xxx~~ has to give their names to the ortsgruppenleiter so that the State officials concerned can be informed." Do you know whether the block leiters spied on the people living in their blocks and then gave a report to the orts- ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ortsgruppenleiter?

A. No, I didn't know of an instance in which block and zellen leiters spied on their fellow citizens.

Q. Would such an activity be in accordance with the activity of the block and zellen leiters in general?

A. No, they would have been incompatible.

Q. Why?

A. The blockleiters were supposed to enjoy the confidence of their fellow citizens. They should be aids and guides in the social life, and they had, therefore, to enjoy the confidence of their fellow citizens.

Q. To summarize, Mr. Witness, state whether it is correct, as the Prosecution has done, to charge the block and zellen leiters for being responsible in regard to the planning and execution of an aggressive war, crimes against international warfare, and crimes against humanity~~x~~. Please express your opinion from the point of view of a political leiter in the enlarged staff of the gauleiter.

A. The block and zellen leiters in no way ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ played the role described by the Prosecution. In most cases block and zellen leiters were younger party members who had joined the party only after the seizure of power. They were not considered as equals by the older members of the

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Party. They were neither fanatical fighters nor were they in a position to stimulate enthusiasm. They were not able to convince their fellow citizens politically. There was hardly political contact between the masses of German people and those block and zellen leiters. And, from my practical experience, I know that the office of block and zellen leiter was not one which was desired. Some kind of pressure had in most cases to be applied to make Party members accept such office. Since there was so much red tape involved, there was an additional reason why the office of block and zellen leiter was not liked. Only after the intensified air warfare did they gain some positions of prominence and positions in which they could show off to some extent to their fellow citizens.

(A recess was taken until 1400 hours.)

Com. B.
Take 3 - 1
Winkler
17 June 1946
Time - P

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OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY FOR THE DEFENSE OF ORGANIZATIONS, TAKEN BEFORE A COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL DATED XX 13 MARCH 1946.

17 June 1946

COMMISSIONER:

Mr. George R. Taylor

CORPS OF POLITICAL LEADERS

(The Commission convened at 1415 hours)

PAUL KOPPE, a witness, took the stand and testified as follows:

MR. TAYLOR: The witness is reminded that he is still under oath.

THE WITNESS: Yes

MR. TAYLOR: Are you through with the witness, Dr. Nath? Are you ready for XXX cross examination?

DR. NATH: Yes, sir.

CROSS EXAMINATION

BY LT. COL. GRIFFITH JONES:

Q. I am not clear exactly what you mean by communal policy as it is being translated; that is to say, the work of the Gaulamtsleiter?

A. The Gaulamtsleiter would be to mean for municipal policy.

Q. Is it what we mean by the local government of the district/ as opposed to political government?

A. It is an arbitrary word picked up by the party. I have repeated that the word which should have been used would have been amt fur kommunalwesen, which would be for municipal things. I should rather have it called amt fur kommunalwesen, meaning office for matters pertaining to the community.

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Q. Well, no, so that I'm quite clear, were matters pertaining to the community not directly under the authority and direction of the Gauleiter and Kreisleiter?

A No.

Q Under whose direction were they?

A They were subordinate to the Government President, to the Government Minister and the Ministry of the Interior.

Q. And by whom were they administered those communal matters?

A. ~~Ministry~~ Minister of the Interior.

Q. But locally - say in your Kreisleiter?

A. The lord mayor in the city and ~~Ratsherren~~ Landrat in the rural districts.

Q. So that it was, in fact, - what you mean by communal matters, administration of communal matters, is really the local government of the district?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And upon what matters in connection with that local government was it necessary that the political leiter should be advised?

A. The party representative was put into the communal administration by the Gemeindeordnung which is to say the charter of the community, by which it functioned, and he had certain rights. He had the right to ~~xxxx~~ suggest names for the positions of the leading communal officials; that is, of the mayor and similar positions.

Q. Now, was the purpose of that to obtain party influence in the local government administration?

A. Not in that sense. The party was already represented in the person of the Ratsherren, the councillor of laws or other man. Rather he was to be the advisor in matters pertaining to communal administration for the Kreisleiter or Gauleiter

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Q. But I want to know - why should the Gauleiter have had the right of recommending appointments in the local government?

A. That was put down by law of the German community charter.

Q. It was, in fact, was it not, to give the Gauleiter an influence in that local government?

A. No doubt that was it.

Q. The Gauamtsleiter was one of the means whereby the Gauleiter made his nominations and obtained his influence?

A. No, not in that sense. The Gauamtsleiter rather was to arbitrate - to equalize between government authorities and party.

Q. I don't suppose you Gauleiters appointed anybody who was opposed to the Nazi party to a position in the local government?

A. He saw to it that he was agreeable to the party.

Q. And you, as Gauamtsleiter, would not have recommended anybody for appointment who was not a supporter of the party?

A. I was not a Gauamtsleiter. I was a Gauhauptstellenleiter. It was not my job to have the discussion with the government, but was the job of the Gauamtsleiter. The Gauamtsleiter saw to it that the person in question was professionally qualified.

Q. I want to ask you about another matter. You have told us that some kind of pressure was almost always brought to bear in order to obtain Blockleiters and Zellenleiters?

A. Yes, every party member was obliged to accept an office unless they had a very valid reason not to do so.

Q. You are not suggesting, are you, that there were any Block and Zellenleiters who were opposed to the Nazi policy or the Nazi party?

A. I do not say it in that sense.

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Q. I only wanted to clear the matter up. When you talk of pressure, therefore, being brought to bear to persuade them to take on those positions, what kind of pressure do you mean?

A. Party pressure or exclusion procedure.

Q. And what was the effect of party pressure upon an ordinary member?

A. He could have been excluded or expelled from the party or other penalties.

Q. There were a great many people in Germany who were not members of the Nazi party, weren't there?

A. That is correct.

Q. They all seemed to exist?

A. Yes.

Q. Now, you've told us a certain amount about the activities of the Blockleiters and Zellenleiters. In what you have said, are you speaking of their activities throughout the whole period 1933 to 1945, or only during the war years?

A. I'm referring to the time right after the seizure of power by the Nazi party, when the Nazi party became great and a very large amount of offices became necessary to be filled, and it was necessary to take the Block and Zellenleiter whatever was available at that time.

Q. Taking that time, then perhpas I might add one of the tasks that was there to the list you gave us. Organized Jew baiting was one of the things they had to carry out, wasn't it?

A. It is not known to me.

Q. But you say - you've set yourself up as being in a position to state authoratively the tasks of Block and Zellenleiters. Let me read you an extract from a letter dated 7 June 1933, written by the Gau propaganda leiter to all Kreisleiter. I refer to P.S. 374, U.S. 729. The subject is Jew baiting and the letter reads: "The district directorate (that is to say the Kreisleiter - at

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least I suppose it is Kreisletier. Yes. District directorate will set up a committee which has the task of directing and supervising the communities in the whole district. Then on two lines further down - the committee will form in all the Ortsgruppes and support locally such committee whose names shall be known only to the district committee. Then to go on - The members of the sub-committees shall report to the district the names of those party members and other Germans who buy from Jews. Now if the Ortsgruppenleiter is going to set up committees in the locality of his Ortsgruppe, he is going to employ the Zellen and Blockleiters, is he not? Those are the persons that he would naturally ask to assist him?

A. At my home town, Herne, there were three or four department stores, and the names of those entering were written down.

Q. I don't know whether you understood me or not or whether you don't want to answer the question. Your Ortsgruppenleiter received instructions to set up local committees in order to organize Jew baiting, and I ask, is not your Ortsgruppenleiter going to enroll the help of his Zellenleiter and Blockleiter to set up those committees?

A. It is very difficult for me to answer this question, because I was not an Ortsgruppenleiter and in my capacity I only saw the Blockleiters of my own.

Q. And in your experience don't you know that Block and Zellenleiters were responsible for organizing Jew baiting within their locality?

A. No.

Q. You say that you are speaking only from your knowledge of your own Blockleiters?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know any other Blockleiters or have you known any other Block-leiters other than your own?

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A. I have known very many later on, since I later on became the personnel director of the city, I met very many Blockleiters, but that was later on. That is to say the civil servants came to me and tole me of their experiences - that took place after 1936.

~~EX~~

LT. COL. GRIFFITH JONES: I have no further questions to ask.

FRENCH AND RUSSIAN PROSECUTORS: No further questions.

MR. TAYLOR: Have you any re-direct, ~~to the witness~~, Dr. Nath?

DR. NATH: Thank you very much, no.

MR. TAYLOR: If there are no further questions, the witness will be excused.

~~WITNESS~~

We will have a short recess before we continue with the next witness.

RECESSED: 1445 hours

The foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the testimony of PAUL KOPPE, taken on 17 June 1946.

Bernice Winkler
Reporter (pp. 1-2-20-25

6 Dorothée - J. Noll
Reporter (pp. 3-9

Reporter (pp.

CERTIFIED TO:

Geo. R. Taylor
Commissioner

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H0949-0027

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY FOR THE DEFENSE OF ORGANIZATIONS TAKEN BEFORE A COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL DATED 13 MARCH 1946.

17 June 1946.

COMMISSIONER:

Mr. George R. Taylor.

CORPS OF POLITICAL LEADERS

(The Commission convened at 1000 hours)

PAUL KOPPE, a witness, took the stand and testified as follows:

BY THE COMMISSIONER:

Will the witness raise his right hand and state his name and repeat after me?

THE WITNESS: Paul Koppe.

MR. TAYLOR: I swear by God, the Almight and Omniscient, that I will speak the pure truth, and will withhold and add nothing.

(The witness repeated).

MR. TAYLOR: Witness will please sit down.

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY DR. MATH (Defense Counsel)

Q. Witness, you are by profession a municipal civil servant and have practiced as such for the last thirty-two years?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it correct that you are 49 today?

A. Yes.

Q. What were your motives for entering the party, and when did you join the party?

A. I joined the part on the first of May 1933. I hoped that the party would lead Germany out of economic misery.

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Q. Were you a member of any democratic political party before 1933, or were you organized politically at all?

A. I was not a member of any political party previous to 1933. I was a member of the Federation of Municipal civil servants and employees.

Q. You were a Hauptamtsleiter official of the Gaulamts-leiter party for the communial policy, and attached to the staff of Ga leiters. From when until when did you hold this office, and where did you hold this office, and is that place your home town?

A. I held this office from January 1, 19[illegible], until the end fo the War at Bochum and later at Herne. Neither of them was my home town, but I had lived in Herne since 1922.

Q. How did it happen that you were to hold the office of a Hauptstellenleiter?

A. My chief, the Lord Mayor of Herne, was at the same time Gauamtsleiter for Community Policy. Due to the fact that I had a broad training and experience in matters of community administration, he selected me as a co-worker in his Party office.

Q. Did you get any identifying papers or uniforms in your position as a party official?

A. I did not get any papers, but I did get a uniform.

Q. Wasn't there in existence a regulation that only that one could wear the uniform of a Political Leiter who also was in possession of a Political Leiter's identifying papers?

A. Yes, such a regulation was in existence, but an exception was made in my case, because I was supposed to participate in meetings.

Q. Were there in existence regulations compelling Party members to accept Party office or to join organizations of the Party?

A. Without a very good reason, as for illness or being overburdened by work, nobody could refuse an office. Generally, it was expected that you would join your professional organization, as, for instance, the German Labor Front, or the German Associa-

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tion of Civil Servants. However, to join the SA, SS, or Hitler Youth was voluntary.

Q. Was it possible to give up a political office for political reasons, that is, not sharing the views of the Nazi Party? If so, did that have political consequences for the person concerned?

A. Practically, no. But it had political consequences. Under certain circumstances you could be withdrawn from the Nazi Party.

Q. For 32 years you were a civil servant in community service. If a civil servant was expelled from the Nazi Party because he refused to accept a political office or because he did not want to continue to serve in that office, would that result in consequences as far as the position of the civil servant was concerned?

A. He lost his position, his salary, his pension claims; and his family got into serious distress.

Q. Please describe to the Commission the structure of the Office for Community Policy of the Nazi Party.

A. With the Reichsleiter, the supreme officer of the Party, there was a Hauptamt, a main office for Community Policy with a Gauamtsleiter and his five assistants. The functions of these five assistants were: One was the director of the office; the second was concerned with structures and settlements and colonization; the third was concerned with legal matters, culture, and training; the fourth was concerned with questions of relief, workers, and civil servants; and the last was in charge of community plants. In disciplinary matters, the Gauamtsleiter and his five assistants were subordinate to the Gauleiter. But as far as the professional instructions were concerned, they were received direct from the Hauptamt for Community Policy with the Reichsleiter. The Hauptstellenleiter did not have any staff of assistants. It was contemplated that they should have assistants, but that plan was never carried out. On the level of the Kreis, there was a Kreisamtsleiter for Community Policy, who, in

disciplinary matters again, was subordinate to the Kreisleiter. But his professional directives were received from the Gauamtsleiter, for the Community Policy. Those Kreisamtleiters for Community Policy, again, were only one main office. There was no office for Community Policy on the level of the Ortsgruppe.

Q. Please describe the activity of the Gauamtsleiter for Community Policy.

A. He was concerned with the self-governing tasks of his community, as, for instance, buildings and settlements, community legal matters, culture, theater, music, professional training, relief, workers, civil servants, employees, and economic questions. He was with the Hauptstelle for employees, civil servants and workers. Practically, he was mainly concerned with the questions of salary, training, instructions, and administrative procedure. We were exclusively professional advisors of the Gauamtsleiter. Without having received a special order, we never communicated with any higher or lower Party officials.

Q. Did the leiter of the office for Community Policy participate in the staff meetings of the Gauleiter regularly, and how often did these meetings take place?

A. As far as I know, they participated in such conferences every month or every second month.

Q. Did they receive on the Gau level from the Gauleiter, and on the Kreis level from the Kreisleiter, any kind of orders; and, if so, what kind?

A. In accordance with a Gau law called Gau Community Regulation, the Gauleiter issued orders to the Gauamtsleiter in regard to the filling of high vacancies in the community organization.

Q. Please give details of what kind of orders he issued.

A. In accordance with above-mentioned law, the Gau Community Regulation, the Gauamtsleiter had a special function. He had the privilege of taking action whenever a vacancy occured to be filled. And then the State authority, the Regierungspraesident, had to appoint to such offices.

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That was practically the manner of how the Gauleiter established the contact between Party and State.

Q. In what way did the Gauamtsleiter for Community Policy fill a function in the filling of such vacancies?

A. He saw to it that the person suggested to fill that vacancy should have the right qualifications and training.

Q. Do I understand you correctly, that you are referring to the professional civil servant's qualifications?

A. Essentially, his professional qualifications as a civil servant.

Q. What was the connection with the Office for Community Policy with other organizations--the SS, the German Labor Front, etc.?

A. There was no connection whatsoever.

Q. Did you know the Organizations Book? Could you tell on the basis of yur experience whether the contents of this book has been onserved in the roster of regulations it followed?

A. No, I didn't know that Organizations Book; and if it should have been the definite yeard stick for all Party practices, I believe the officials would have known it.

Q. The Amtsstellenleiter and the Hauptstellenleiter for Community Policy are considered political leiters. Did they have anything to do with politics in the narrow sense of the word?

A. No, they didn't.

Q. Do you, therefore, think that it was correct that those amtsstellenleiters and hauptstellenleiters for Community Policy were called political leiters?

A. No; it would have been much more appropriate if they had been called professional advisors; and I understand that that term had

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been used at an earlier date.

Q Was it, therefore, correct to callthat office, "Office for Community Policy?"

A No, it would have been better to call that office, "Office for Community Matters." As a matter of fact, that office didn't have any influence on the politics of the community.

Q Would it be fair to call the "Office for Community Policy" a merely professional office?

A Yes.

Q Were there other offices of such merely professional nature? If so, which?

A Similar offices of such a professional nature were the Office for Technique, the Office for Education, the Office for Audition and Revisions, the Office of Agriculture, the Office of University Teachers, and the Office of Civil Servants.

Q Should one also add the Office for Veterans?

A The Office for Trained Crafts and Industries, yes.

Q Did you know whether the political leiters you knew belonged to the Christian Church?

A A number of those I know did belong to a Christian Church.

A Did the political leiters receive, either from the Gauleiter, from the Kreisleiter, or from the Ortsgruppenleiter, instructions to leave the Church?

A No, they didn't receive such instructions.

Q Now I am coming to the specific points ofthe indictment. The Prosecution has charged that the political leiters joined and shared in a common plan of conspiracy with the purpose of carrying out crimes against the people, the laws of warfare and humanity. The Prosecution considers the Party Program the main basis for those charges. I shall coffront you with a few of those points of the Party Program, and would like to have your attitude from the standpoint of the political leiters. In regard to Point One, from which I quote: "We demand the union of all Germans, on the basis of self-governing rule, into a greater Germany." Express your opinionon that.

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A If I understand correctly, thatpoint referred particularly to Germans living in border areas, as, for instance, Austria and the Sudeten District. If I remember correctly, both Austria and the Sudetenland had expressed their desire after the first World War to join Germany in one way or another.

Q In regard to land and soil, Point Three of the Party Program -- I quote: "We demand land and soil (colonies) to feed our people and to resettle our surplus population." Was this point interpreted in the Corps of Political Leiters, and particularly that faction which you had in your offices -- was that to be interpreted as a plan for conquest of foreign territory?

A No. Germany was not able to feed all of its population, and therefore it was aimed to get back part of the colonies by way of negotiations The use of force in that field was entirely out of the question because Germany didn't have the navy to conduct warfare of that kind overseas.

Q Did the leiters of the professional offices in the staff of the Gauleiter or Kreisleiter, particularly the Office for Community Policy, have any part as leaders, organizers, instigators or conspirators in carrying out of a common plan or conspiracy aimed at the committing of a crime against the people, and what did those professional leiters know of such a plan or such a conspiracy?

A They didn't know of such a plan.

Q Did the professional leiters learn within the framework of the Party anything of theplan of aggressive war against Poland?

A No, they didn't learn anything.

Q How did the leiters of the professional office react to the outbreak of war in September, 1939?

A Not with enthusiasm or fanatical attitude, but with gravity.

Q Were they surprised by the outbreak of the war?

A Yes, they were surprised.

Q In regard to the unequal evaluation of races and to anti-Semitism, Point Four of the Party Program: "A Citizen can be only one who is a member of the German People. A German can be only one who is of the German faith.

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Therefore, no Jew can be a German." This program resulted in a most horrible persecution of the Jews. How was this part of the Party Program interpreted by the political leiters whom you know-- that means by the leiters of the professional offices?

A This point was explained to us in the following manner: that the influence of the Jewish fellow citizens in the State and in the economy should be restricted in accordance with their numbers. This should be performed in a humane manner and only by legal means.

Q This led subsequently to various forms of persecution of Jewish citizens, as, for instance, their wearing of the Jewish Star and getting different food rations, and being limited in living quarters, and, finally, their deportation to concentration camps. Did the political leiters of the Offices for Community Policy have anything to do whatsoever with any of those plans?

A No, they had nothing to do with any of them.

Q How did they learn of those anti-Jewish measures?

A Not through the Party, but rather through the press and through the actual happenings.

Q In regard to rearmament, I quote from the Party Program: "We demand the getting rid of a mercenary troop and the formation of a people's army." Was this point of the Party Program to be interpreted as a demand for an aggressive war?

A The transformation of a mercenary troop into a people's army could not be interpreted into a demand for aggressive warfare. For instance, Switzerland had a people's army and never conducted an aggressive war.

Q May I ask you for a brief summary. Did the political leiters, particularly the leiters of professional offices, consider the quotedpoints of the Party Program as major points of a common plan of conspiracy to conquer their own people and foreign people, for subsequent crimes against peace, the rules of war, and humanity?

A No, that did not occur to us at all. We never believed in an aggressive war. We acted in good faith, and we were told that peace and the building of a social State would be accomplished.

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Q The Prosecution further claims that the Corps of Political Leiters, which would include the leiters for the Office of Community Policy, was responsible for all measures, including those of a legislative matter, which were taken by State and Government in Germany to engage in a conspiracy carried on by the conspirators considered criminal and the organization considered criminal. Did the Amtsleiters for Community Policy at the gau or krois level have any possibility to influence the legislation of the Third Reich?

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maybe only in the form of mere suggestions?

A Only in matters of merely professional nature could the Amtsleiters make such suggestions -- which then were forwarded thr ugh the Party officials to the Ministry of State which was concerned with those matters. This occurred in regard to the legal form of community plans, in regard to the salary of candidates for a military career, and the training regulations for candidates for the community civil service.

Q Significant examples of the participation of the Corps of Political Leiters, the indictment charges, were given by the participation of the Political Leiters in the persecution of the Christian Church. Were the leiters of professional offices, for instance the Hauptsstellenleiters for Community Policy -- were they informed on the opinions of the supreme Party leadership in regard to Christianity and in regard to the Christian churches? I am submitting to you a letter from the Chief of the Chancellory, Reichsleiter Bormann, which he directed to all gauleiters in 1941. It is the Prosecution's document No. D-75. It is entitled, "Relationship between National Socialism and Christianity", and I quote: (I have to quote the most essential sentences of that document in order to ask the witness questions on it, and I ask the witness because he was attached to the staff of the gauleiter). "National Socialism and Christianity are incompatible. Our National Socialistic philosophy is far superior to the philosophy of Christianity which, in its most essential parts, is derived from Judaism. When, therefore, our youth at a future date will not hear anything any more of the teaching of the definitely inferior Christianity, then Christianity will disappear automatically. From the oncompatibility of National Socialistic and Christian opinions, it is concluded that we have to refuse all strengthening of existing or the support of developing Christian churches."...."More and more progressively we have to see to it that the people will take the influence out of the hands of the churches and their organs, the ministers. Just as the harmful influence of the astrologists and prpphets and other swindlers have been eliminated and superseded by the State, the influence of the Church must be eliminated without any remainder." This was the opinion of Reichsleiter and Chief of the Party Chancellory Bormann at the end of 1941. Did the leiters of the professional offices in your district know of those expressions and ideas?

A I was not informed of their opinions. I don't think that any of my

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colleagues knew about it, or they would have told me about it.

Q This letter by Bormann went to all gauleiters, and there exists the possibility that the opinions of the Chief of Party Chancellory, in regard to his attitude against churches, at least in its main contents, has been given to the staffs of the gauleiters and the kreisleiters.

A Even in its main contents, that instruction has not been handed down to us. In that matter we always expected instruction or regulation, but it never came.

Q A large number of ministers, both Protestant and Catholic, and members of orders were arrested and ordered to concentration camps; and the property of the Church was confiscated. Did the Party leadership give any reasons for those measures of arresting ministers and confiscating Church properties?

A No, nothing was told to us about them. If we learned about them at all, it was only through the press.

Q Would you be in a position to say that the amtsleiters for community questions did not have any part in the carrying out of those measures and had no influence on them?

A No, they had no part in it and no influence on it.

Q Another example of the participation of the political leiters in the conspiracy, given by the Prosecution, is its supposed share in the destruction of the trade unions. The Prosecution states that "Soon after the seizure of power, on May 2, 1933, prominent members of the Corps of Political Leiters of the Party participated in the destruction of the free trade unions." Proceedings, German text, Page 1449, December 18th. Do you know, Witness, who caused the destruction of the trade unions and who carried it out?

A As far as I know, it was performed by Ley, who decided to create one labor union for all.

Q Do you know whether the Office for Community Policy had a share in that action at all?

A I don't think so.

Q The Prosecution charges that there is a responsibility of the Corps of Political Leiters in connection with the Einsatzstab Rosenberg in the occupied territories and the taking away of art treasures from there. Did the

H0949-0038

hauptstellenleiters and the guaamtsleiters for community questions know of the functions and nature of the Einsatzstab Rosenberg?

A No, nothing was known about that.

Q May I conclude from that that the Office for Community Policy had nothing to do with the purpose and functions of the Einsatzstab Rosenberg?

A Y es,the Office for Community Policy had nothing to do with that at all.

Q Now, again to those points of the indictment concerned with crimes against the rules of international warfare. The Corps of Political Leiters is charged with participating in the murder and wounding and mistreatment of Allied fliers who bailed out over Germany or over German-held areas. It is claimed that many pilots were not treated as prisoners of war, but were mistreated or murdered by German civilians -- with the approval, yes, under the direction of, certain members of the Corps of Political Leiters. In this regard the Prosecution has submitted the following document, which I would like to show you. It is the Prosecution's Document PS 157, excerpt from a letter of Reichsleiter Bormann of May 30, 1944. May I ask you to read this very brief document? That letter contains the statement that, in various cases, pilots who bailed out or who had to make emergency landings were lynched by the outrage population immediately after their landing. And then the letter goes on: "It was refrained from taking police or criminal legal action against those members of the people who participated in those actions." The Prosecution stresses that this Bormann letter has been distributed through the order of the command of the Corps of Political Leiters and that they were listed on that distribution -- kreisleiters, gauleiters and the leaders of various organizations. Please pay attention to the distribution key at the end of the document where some man by the name of Friedrich asks that the ortsgruppenleiters are to be informed of the letter only orally. At that time, May 1944, you were a hauptstellenleiter for community policy. Therefore, as a leiter of the professional office, you belonged to the enlarged staff of the gauleiter. Have the leiters of the professional offices received knowledge of this Bormann letter in any way, or have they learned of its contents by any other means?

A I did learn of the contents of the Bormann letter, not in my capacity as a hauptstellenleiter, but through other channels. I don't recall from whom, and from the key of distribution it can be learned that the gauamtsleiters were not supposed to get knowledge of that letter.

HO949-0039

Q Did you, as a hauptstellenleiter for Community Policy, receive any instructions for how enemy aviators should be treated in case of emergency landings?

A No, the leiters of professional offices had nothing to do with that.

Q Were there any emergency landings of Allied Fliers in or near your district? How were they treated?

A Later I learned that one American flier landed near Herne and was kept in the Catholic hospital at Herne until the Americans arrived.

Q I would like to ask you one more question in regard to instructions given by Hitler to Reichsleiter Bouhler and Dr. Brandt in regard to mercy killings. That point too has been used in a charge against the Corps of Political Leiters. This order refers to the granting of the privilege to a number of physicians to be named, who should get the right to administer those mercy killings in those cases where, in accordance with human knowledge, the ill people could not be cured again. (German text 1423, Proceedings December 17th. That is a point of the oral trial brief, no document -- part of the oral brief given at the session of December twelfth.) Did the leiters of the Office for Community Policy know anything of the order by Hitler, and did they have anything to do with its carrying out?

A I do not know of that order. From the beginning of the war until 1942 I was a soldier, and after my return I never conversed on that matter.

Q Finally, I would like to ask you a few questions in regard to block and zellen leiters.

A I do not wish to make any statements about that subject. I can speak of the blockleiter of my own district and how I know him.

Q Were you a blockleiter?

A No.

Q Were you a zellenleiter?

H0949-0040

A No.

Q In your opinion, what were the tasks and functions of the block and zellen leiters?

A The block and zellen leiter collected the party membership fees. He called meetings of the Party, and at times he conducted collections for the Party. Only after the number of air raids increased did the block and zellen leiter get more important tasks. He became a sort of emergency aid, and in that function had to help the wounded and provide shelter for those whose homes were destroyed.

Q Could you tell the Commission how the people characterized the work of the blockleiters?

A They were called a higher category of bank messenger.

Q Making reference to the Organization Book of the Party, the Prosecution has charged that the blockleiters had the best contact with the population and therefore were suitable for the political influencing and the political supervision and surveillance of the people; and Justice Jackson has called the blockleiters the "little Caesars who terrorized the people." Is that correct?

A No. That is not correct. Blockleiters as a whole were younger members of the Party who were not fanatics.

Q The Prosecution, through Colonal Storey (Proceedings, German text 1380, December 17th), states that the police in Germany was represented by the blockleiters. Actually the blockleiters were the little leaders with real and actual power of the citizens in their district. Is that correct?

A No, that is not correct. The police alone, carried out the rights and privileges of the police, and the blockleiters had nothing to do with that.

Q The Prosecution further charges "without responsibility before the law, and without being authorized to do so by any court, the Nazis were in position to confiscate property, to deprive people of their liberty--even of their lives." Were the blockleiters or zellenleiters ever given any of those privileges?

H0949-0041

A No, that is entirely out of the question, and I didn't know of one instance of that kind.

Q Ley, in his Organization Book, calls the blockleiter and zellenleiters "Hoheitstraegers." Who, in practice, was a hoheitstraeger, and were the block and zellen leiters practically given hoheitstraegers' rights?

A Neither the block or zellen leiters had any hoheitstraggers' rights.

Q It is, therefore, correct that the Organizations Book calls the block and zellen leiters hoheitstraegers?

A No.

Q The Prosecution has excepted the members of the staff of the ortsgruppenleiter. Were the block and zellen leiters superiors of the political leiters staff in the office of the ortsgruppenleiter?

A No, block and zellen leiters were not the superiors of the political leiters in the office of the ortsgruppenleiter.

Q Who had higher privileges--the political leiters in the staff of the ortsgruppenleiter, or the block and zellen leiters?

A In my opinion, the members of the staff of the ortsgruppenleiter had greater privileges and rights, because they were authorized to give orders of the whole territory, while the block and zellen leiters could give orders only to the very small territory of the block or zellen.

Q I am quoting from the Organizations Book, PS 1893, Page 101: "The block leiter has to find those who spread damaging rumor and he has to give their names to the ortsgruppenleiter so that th State officials concerned can be informed." Do you know whether the block leiters spied on the people living in their blocks and then gave a report to the ortsgruppenleiter?

A No, I didn't know of an instance in which block and zelle leiters spied on their fellow citizens.

Q Would such activity be in accordance with the activity of the block and zellen leiters in general?

H0949-0042

A No, they would have been incompatible.

Q Why?

A The blockleiters were supposed to enjoy the confidence of their fellow citizens. They should be aids and guides in the social life, and they had, therefore, to enjoy the confidence of thei fellow citizens.

Q To summarize, Mr. Witness, state whether it is correct, as the Prosecution has done, to charge the block and zellen leiters for being responsible in regard to the planning and execution of an aggressive war, crimes against international warfare, and crimes against humanity. Please express your opinion from the point of view of a political leiter in the enlarged staff of the gauleiter.

A The block and zellen leiters in no way played the role described by the Prosecution. In most cases block and zellen leiters were younger party members who had joined the party only after the seizure of power. They were not considered as equals by the older members of the Party. They were neither fanatical fighters nor were they in a position to stimulate enthusiasm. They were not able to convince their fellow citizens politically. There was hardly political contact between the masses of German people and those block and zellen leiters. And, from my practical experience, I know that the office of block and zellen leiter was not one which was desired. Some kind of pressure had in most cases to be applied to make Party members accept such office. Since there was so much red tape involved, there was an additional reason why the office of block and zellen leiter was not liked. Only after the intensified air warfare did they gain some positions of prominence and positions in which they could show off to some extent to their fellow citizens.

(A recess was taken until 1400 hours.)

H0949-0043

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY FOR THE DEFENSE OF ORGANIZATIONS, TAKEN BEFORE A COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL DATED 13 MARCH 1946.

17 June 1946

COMMISSIONER:

Mr. George R. Taylor.

CORPS OF POLITICAL LEADERS

(The Commission convened at 1415 hours.)

PAUL KOPPE, a witness, took the stand and testified as follows:

MR. TAYLOR: The witness is reminded that he is still under oath.

THE WITNESS: Yes.

MR. TAYLOR: Are you through with the witness, Dr. Nath? Are you ready for cross examination?

DR. NATH: Yes, sir.

CROSS EXAMINATION

BY LT. COL. GRIFFITH JONES:

Q. I am not clear exactly what you mean by communal policy as it is being translated; that is to say, the work of the Gaulamtsleiter?

A. Gaulamtsleiter would be to mean for municipal policy.

Q. Is it what we mean by the local government of the district as opposed to political government?

A. It is an arbitrary word picked up by the party. I have repeated that the word which should have been used would have been amt fur kommunalwesen, which would be for municipal things. I should rather have it called amt fur kommunalwesen, meaning office for matters pertaining to the community.

Q. Well, no, so that I'm quite clear, were matters pertaining to the community not directly under the authority and direction of the Gauleiter and Kreisleiter?

A. No.

Q. Under whose direction were they?

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A. They were subordinate to the Government President, to the Government Minister and the Ministry of the Interior.

Q. And by whom were they administered those communal matters?

A. Minister of the Interior.

Q. But locally - say in your Kreisleiter?

A. The lord mayor in the city and Landrat in the rural districts.

Q. So that it was, in fact, -- what you mean by communal matters, administration of communal matters, is really the local government of the district?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And upon what matters in connection with that local government was it necessary that the political leiter should be advised?

A. The party representative was put into the communal administration by the Gemeindeordnung which is to say the charter of the community, by which it functioned, and he had certain rights. He had the right to suggest names for the positions of the leading communal officials; that is, of the mayor and similar positions.

Q. Now, was the purpose of that to obtain party influence in the local government administration?

A. Not in that sense. The party was already represented in the person of the Ratsherren, the councillor of laws or other man. Rather he was to be the advisor in matters pertaining to communal administration for the Kreisleiter or Gauleiter.

Q. But I want to know -- why should the Gauleiter have had the right of recommending appointments in the local government?

A. That was put down by law of the German community charter.

Q. It was, in fact, was it not, to give the Gauleiter an influence in that local government?

A. No doubt that was it.

Q. The Gauamtsleiter was one of the means whereby the Gauleiter made his nominations and obtained his influence?

A. No, not in that sense. The Gauamtsleiter rather was to arbitrate --

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to equalize between government authorities and party.

Q. I don't suppose you Gauleiters appointed anybody who was opposed to the Nazi party to a position in the local government?

A. He saw to it that he was agreeable to the party.

Q. And you, as Gauamtsleiter, would not have recommended anybody for appointment who was not a supporter of the party?

A. I was not a Gauamtsleiter. I was a Gauhauptstellenleiter. It was not my job to have the discussion with the government, but was the job of the Gauamtsleiter. The Gauamtsleiter saw to it that the person in question was professionally qualified.

Q. I want to ask you about another matter. You have told us that some kind of pressure was almost always brought to bear in order to obtain Blockleiters and Zellenleiters?

A. Yes, every party member was obliged to accept an office unless they had a very valid reason not to do so.

Q. You are not suggesting, are you, that there were any Block and Zellenleiters who were opposed to the Nazi policy or the Nazi party?

A. I do not say it in that sense.

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Q. I only wanted to clear the matter up. When you talk of pressure, therefore, being brought to bear to persuade them to take those positions, what kind of pressure do you mean?

A. Party pressure, or exclusion procedure.

Q. And what was the effect of party pressure upon an ordinary member?

A. He could have been excluded or expelled from the party or other penalties.

Q. There were a great many people in Germany who were not members of the Nazi party, weren't there?

A. That is correct.

Q. They all seemed to exist?

A. Yes.

Q. Now, you've told us a certain amount about the activites of the Blockleiters and Zellenleiters. In what you have said, are you speaking of their activities throughout the whole period 1933 to 1945, or only during the war years?

A. I'm referring to the time right after the seizure of power by the Nazu party, when the Nazi party became great and a very large amount of offices became necessary to be filled, and it was necessary to take the Block and Zellenleiter whatever was available at that time.

Q. Taking that time, then perhaps I might add one of the tasks that was there to the list you gave us. Organized Jew baiting was one of the things they had to carry out, wasn't it?

A. It is not know to me.

Q. But you say - you've set yourself up as being in a position to state authoritatively the tasks of Block and Zellenleiters. Let me read you an extract from a letter dated 7 June 1933, written by the Gau propaganda leiter to all Kreisleiter. I refer to PS-374, U.S. 729. The subject is Jew baiting and the letter reads: The district directorate (that is to say the Kreisleiter - at least I suppose it is Kreisleiter. Yes. District directorate will set up a committee which has the task

of directing and supervising the communities in the whole district. Then on two lines further down - the committee will form in all the Ortsgruppes and support locally such committee whose names shall be known only to the ditrcit committee. Then to go on - The members of the sub-committees shall report to the district the names of those party members and other Germans who buy from Jews. Now, if the Ortsgruppenleiter is going to set up committees in the locality of his Ortsgruppe, he is going to employ the Zellen and Blockleiters, is he not? Those are the persons that he would naturally ask to assist him?

A. At my home town, Herne, there were three or four department stores, and the names of those entering were written down.

Q. I don't know whether you understood me or not, or whether you don't want to asnwer the question. Your Ortsgruppenleiter received instructions to set up local committees in order to organize Jew baiting, and I ask, is not your Ortsgruppenleiter going to entoll the help of his Zellenleiter and Blockletier to set up those committees?

A. It is very difficult for me to answer this question, because I was not an Ortsgruppenleiter, and in my capacity I only saw the Blockletiers of my own.

Q. And in your experience, don't you know that Block and Zellenleiters were responsible for organizing Jew baiting within their locality?

A. No.

Q. You say that you are speaking only from your knowledge of your own Blocklieters?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know any other Blockleiters, or have you known any other Blocklieters other than your own?

A. I have known very many later on, since I later on became personnel director of the city, I met very many Blockleiters, but that was later on. That is to say, the civil servants came to me and told me of their experiences - that took place after 1936.

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LT. COL. GRIFFITH JONES: I have no further questions to ask.

FRENCH AND RUSSIAN PROSECUTORS: No further questions.

MR. TAYLOR: Have you any re-direct, Dr. Nath?

DR. NATH: Thank you very much, no.

MR. TAYLOR: If there are no further questions, the witness will be excused. We will have a short recess before we continue with the next witness.

RECESSED: 1445 hours.

The foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the testimony of PAUL KOPPE, taken on 17 June 1946.

BERNICE WINKLER
Reporter

DOROTHY J. NOLL
Reporter

CERTIFIED TO:

GEORGE R. TAYLOR
Commissioner.

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